



**United States Department of State**  
**Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs**  
**Washington, DC 20522**

November 1, 2016

Dear American Host Family:

On behalf of the U.S. Department of State, I welcome your decision to host a secondary school student. The secondary school student program is one of many ways foreign nationals participate in people-to-people exchange programs in the United States. People-to-people exchanges are a valuable tool of foreign policy. The secondary school student program offers a unique opportunity for you to experience firsthand the richness and diversity of a culture different from your own, and for you to exemplify American values and culture to a foreign visitor. Through this program, you will join thousands of American families who serve as citizen ambassadors of the United States. Many families have found the secondary school student program to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience.

It is important that you understand this program before deciding whether it is the best fit for you and your family. Our secondary school student program is primarily an exchange opportunity with the goal of increasing mutual understanding between foreign nationals and Americans. The way you interact with your secondary school student will have a significant impact on the way he or she understands this country and Americans. It is important to remember that secondary school students are not simply teenagers studying abroad; they are valued guests in our country and may need time to adjust, especially in the beginning. As such, the most successful hosts expend the time, energy and initiative necessary to help their students adjust to American life and to ensure they are happy, healthy and engaged in cultural activities. Hosts should maintain a high level of communication, attention, and understanding throughout the program. I ask you to carefully assess the amount of time and attention you have available before committing to this program.

The regulations governing the secondary school student program are found at eCFR — [Exchange Visitor Program regulations](#) (22 CFR 62 - Exchange Visitor Program). These regulations address the most frequently asked questions about the program and provide the rules under which the program operates. It is extremely important that you notify your sponsoring organization if you have any concerns or if the student's personal health, safety or well-being is threatened in any way. If the sponsoring organization is not responsive to your concerns, you should contact the Department of State directly through our J-1 Visa Emergency Helpline (1-866-283-9090), which is also available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, or by e-mail at [JVisas@state.gov](mailto:JVisas@state.gov).

The secondary school student program offers you, your family, your exchange student, your local school and community the opportunity to create a strong lifelong relationship. I hope this will be a positive and rewarding experience for all of you. The Department of State is deeply appreciative of your part in ensuring the program reaches its maximum potential as a quality educational and cultural exchange experience.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Keri M. Lowry".

Keri M. Lowry  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Private Sector Exchange